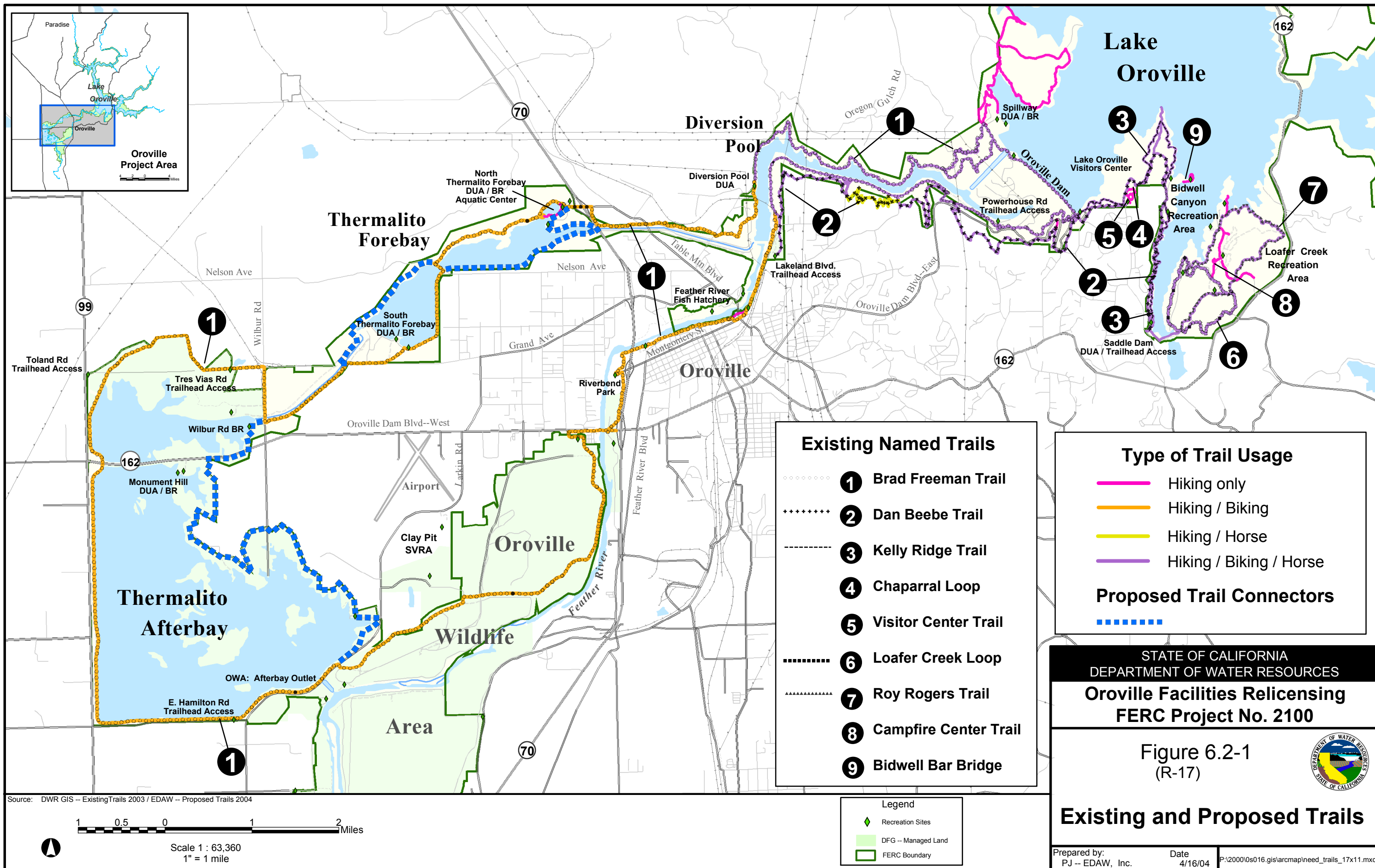


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6.2.2.3 Thermalito Afterbay

Another potential area for loop trails is the Thermalito Afterbay. Currently, the Brad P. Freeman Trail runs along the levee on the west and south sides of the Thermalito Afterbay. Although several miles of new trail would be necessary, the trail could be continued around the east side and join with the portion of trail up by the Tail Channel. This loop would require the trail to cross SR 162. Sensitive vegetation communities and species would be considerations, thus potentially limiting the amount of shoreline access the trail could offer. However, there are fire roads available around the Afterbay that could be upgraded for trail use, thus reducing sensitive species and vegetation considerations. Upgrades would likely include signage, trailheads, and toilet facilities. A loop trail from East Hamilton Road to the tail channel would be about 6.7 miles long. Seasonal restrictions could also be placed on certain trails during nesting season if trails were close to sensitive habitat areas. Trails may also need to have seasonal restrictions to avoid trail user encounters with hunters during the hunting seasons.

6.2.2.4 OWA

The OWA is the second largest use area in the study area. However, there is only one formal trail, the Brad P. Freeman Trail, which runs along roads through the western portion of the OWA north of the Afterbay outlet. There are many informal trails running through the OWA, some of which could be upgraded to formalized trails. Due to the significant presence of wildlife in the OWA, wildlife viewing areas and interpretive trails could be provided. Potential trail routes in the OWA would need to consider sensitive habitat areas, as well as hunting use. Trails may need to have seasonal restrictions to avoid encounters with hunters during hunting seasons. Trails would also need to be appropriate to the management goals for the area in terms of the amount and type of use allowed (for example, horses are not allowed in OWA), as well as the siting of trails within sensitive areas. Potential trails could include a loop trail around One-Mile Pond, a trail between the Pacific Heights and SR 70 entrances, and trails within the northern part of the OWA. Trails considered in this area should also include accompanying trailhead facilities and appropriate annual O&M.

6.3 RECREATION-RELATED PROGRAMMATIC NEEDS

Existing and future Oroville Facilities-wide programmatic needs are summarized below and in Section 5.3 of this study. These overall programmatic needs for the Oroville Facilities area include:

- ≠ Clarify agency recreation-related management responsibilities;
- ≠ Develop and implement a recreation monitoring program;
- ≠ Implement additional programmatic recreation-related operations and maintenance actions;

- ∄ Implement additional safety-related actions over time;
- ∄ Develop and implement a proposed Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan for the OWA;
- ∄ Develop and implement a proposed Comprehensive Non-motorized Trails Program; and
- ∄ Develop and implement a proposed Interpretation and Education (I&E) Program.

6.3.1 Agency Management Responsibilities

Specific State agency responsibilities of DWR, DPR, DFG, and DBW should be clarified for the management, operation, construction, maintenance, and funding of recreation and recreation-related projects in the Oroville Facilities area. In addition, the responsibilities of other agencies including the USFS, BLM, and FRRPD are often not clearly defined in the study area. Because responsibilities are not always clearly defined, issues may sometimes not be addressed by the appropriate agency or in a timely and efficient manner. Some suggestions to better clarify agency management roles include:

- ∄ Reassess the geographic boundaries of LOSRA and OWA, as well as the FERC Boundary;
- ∄ Reevaluate the boundaries of lands managed by federal agencies; transfer lands from federal to State control and/or ownership where possible and desirable; and
- ∄ Clarify the specific areas, facilities, and activities to be managed, maintained, and/or funded by each agency or district.

There is also a need for greater local public involvement in future recreation development, management, or operation within the study area. This has led to controversy between various State agencies and some user groups. Some suggestions that should be considered regarding this issue include:

- ∄ Create a new Recreation Advisory Committee (or similar entity) to provide additional stakeholder some level of input and feedback regarding future development and management of recreation resources within the study area; and
- ∄ Pursue new cooperative arrangements with other non-governmental organizations to help facilitate additional public involvement in recreation resource management within the study area.

Consider enhanced and stable funding for operations, maintenance, and other recreation-related needs at LOSRA and OWA. In addition, discrepancies in funding responsibilities defined under the Davis-Dolwig Act and FERC orders specific to the Oroville Facilities have contributed to past and current funding issues. The following are suggestions to consider for improving the funding to better manage recreation resources within the Oroville Facilities area:

- € Clarify the funding responsibilities of all relevant State agencies (DWR, DPR, DFG, and DBW) and address discrepancies between FERC-defined and State-defined funding obligations;
- € Develop a coordinated annual budget for each State agency involved in the Oroville Facilities;
- € Coordinate, identify, and pursue additional potential funding sources, including cost-sharing, grants, and other reimbursements from State, federal, and private sources; and
- € Identifying and pursue potential avenues for collaboration with volunteer groups and activity-specific “friends” organizations to reduce recreation resource funding needs.

6.3.2 Recreation Monitoring Program

Developing and implement a proposed Recreation Monitoring Program. A new monitoring program would track visitation levels at facilities and use areas, monitor the condition of facilities and dispersed use areas and resource impacts, and monitor site and facility capacity, among others. In addition, a periodic recreation survey could be used to track changing visitor perceptions and needs over time. Capacity threshold triggers should be established to determine when appropriate management actions should take place (such as expand existing campgrounds, develop new day use areas, or redirect visitors to other underutilized facilities). The program would contain key monitoring indicators and standards that would be tracked at periodic intervals as appropriate, such as annually for paid fee receipts or vehicle counters, every 6 years during FERC Form 80 filings for overall capacity levels, or every 10 to 15 years for larger efforts such as visitor surveys.

Some examples of monitoring indicators that could be tracked include:

- € Campground and day use site capacity;
- € Boating use levels and type by reservoir zone;
- € Condition of recreation facilities;
- € Visitor crowding perceptions and user conflicts; and
- € Site pioneering and creep (development and expansion of dispersed sites in sensitive resource areas).

6.3.3 Programmatic Operations and Maintenance Actions

Continue to maintain existing and future recreation facilities and sites over the anticipated term of the new license. Over this timeframe, most existing facilities will need to be repaired, replaced, and/or upgraded. It is suggested that an operations and maintenance (O&M) Program be developed and implemented to ensure adequate maintenance and replacement of both existing as well as future recreation facilities and sites within the Oroville Facilities area. Over the new

license term, many changes or events may potentially occur. Continue or increase regular scheduled O&M of recreation facilities and use areas including:

- ⊘ Providing roving maintenance patrols who would look for and address dumping and other problems within dispersed use areas;
- ⊘ Providing litter pick-up during the recreation season and periodic pick-up during the off-season;
- ⊘ Maintaining the cleanliness and sanitation of restrooms, vault toilet buildings, and portable toilets;
- ⊘ Maintaining camping and day use facilities such as tent pads, picnic tables, water faucets, etc.;
- ⊘ Clearing and maintaining trails for safe passage and removing hazard trees;
- ⊘ Maintaining boating facilities such as boat ramps, docks, marker buoys, and parking areas; and
- ⊘ Maintaining fishing-related facilities such as fish cleaning stations and fishing access points.

Provide non-regular O&M of recreation facilities including:

- ⊘ Replacing water, electrical, and septic systems as these infrastructure components reach the end of their effective service life;
- ⊘ Replacing roofing material and siding;
- ⊘ Replacing facilities damaged by fire, vandalism, wind storms, or other events;
- ⊘ Modifying facilities to comply with changing laws and regulations, such as ADAAG, as amended; and
- ⊘ Closing and replacing sites due to resource protection needs, such as endangered species listings or for any safety issues that may arise.

6.3.3.1 Managing OHV Use Impacts

Consider providing improved management of potential resource impacts related to dispersed OHV use at dispersed sites and use areas, especially within the OWA. This is a particular concern within the OWA especially considering that OHV use is prohibited in this area and extensive soil and vegetation damage has occurred. These types of existing impacts suggest the need for a programmatic, Project-wide response to OHV-related impacts, but with a focus on the OWA and Thermalito Afterbay areas (where most OHV use is occurring). Minimize or prevent OHV user impacts in selected sensitive areas by emphasizing:

- ⊘ Erecting and maintaining new vehicle barriers where appropriate;
- ⊘ Increasing the frequency of enforcement patrols with citations;
- ⊘ Quickly restoring damaged areas; and
- ⊘ Implementing a public awareness program (as part of a proposed I&E Program).

To the extent possible, OHV riders should be directed to the Clay Pit SVRA, where this activity is appropriately managed. This site provides a unique opportunity for OHV users and concentrates OHV-related impacts in one area rather than dispersing those impacts over a larger area.

6.3.3.2 Managing Litter Accumulation and Dumping

Improve removal and management of accumulated litter and debris, including dumping, at dispersed sites and use areas, particularly within the OWA. Management responses to this problem may include:

- ⊘ Providing additional periodic litter pick-up and removal within dispersed areas, such as the OWA and Thermalito Afterbay;
- ⊘ Implementing a focused public awareness campaign including a “pack-it-in / pack-it-out” program (as part of a proposed I&E Program);
- ⊘ Implementing a program to minimize the dumping of debris and car abandonment, including the quick removal of this debris;
- ⊘ Increasing the frequency of enforcement patrols, with citations; and
- ⊘ Providing additional trash receptacles and dumpsters in litter-prone areas.

6.3.3.3 Managing User-Defined Trails

Provide increased management of user-defined trails throughout the study area that are causing erosion, vegetation damage, and access with potential disturbance to sensitive cultural resource sites, particularly at dispersed sites and use areas. Dispersed sites see minimal management attention and intervention, and users have created trails to reach shorelines and other destinations that are often too steep or near the shore; thus, erosion is sometimes common.

At popular dispersed sites, consider creating new developed trails with proper slope and drainage control to reduce the impacts at these sites. Focus should be placed on protecting areas with sensitive resources. Regular monitoring and management attention should be given to high priority sites.

6.3.3.4 Managing Dispersed Site Pioneering and Creep

Provide increased management of undeveloped dispersed sites due to the potential for resource impacts, particularly in sensitive areas such as the OWA and Thermalito Afterbay. Such sites tend to creep (get larger in size over time) and can multiply (pioneering) unless they are regularly monitored and appropriate actions are taken to limit this activity. Squatters, as well as uninformed recreationists, may create these sites. Improved management should result in fewer sanitation problems, erosion, vegetation impacts, fire hazards, and impacts to sensitive resources. These dispersed sites rarely see management attention and intervention. As such, focus should be placed on

protecting dispersed areas with sensitive resources. Regular monitoring and management attention should be given to high priority sites. Dispersed site pioneering and creep should be addressed in the proposed recreation monitoring program.

6.3.4 Safety-related Actions

Provide additional safety patrols and/or increased visitor management, primarily in the OWA. Other resource areas may also need additional law enforcement, marine patrols, and/or improved communications over the anticipated term of the new license. Evaluate and implement appropriate actions to provide:

- ⌘ Improved incident and accident reporting;
- ⌘ Improved visitor education and management control; and
- ⌘ Other additional safety-related actions over time.

6.3.4.1 Improved Incident and Accident Reporting

Improve the coordination of incident and accident reporting to allow for a comprehensive analysis of safety-related accidents and incidents over the term of the anticipated new license. One entity should be responsible for collecting and analyzing the data provided by several agencies and responders. This role could be coordinated by the ACC operated by DWR. DWR could request that all area public safety agencies provide a periodic report of accidents and incidents that were related to the Oroville Facilities to the ACC. A comprehensive list of incidents and accidents could allow area land managers to identify significant recreation safety-related issues and trends and to prioritize remedial actions over time.

6.3.4.2 Improved Visitor Education and Management Control

Provide improved visitor education and management control. Topics to address may include:

- ⌘ Boat operators following too close, boat operators not obeying speed regulations (no wake zones), alcohol use while boating, and boaters not wearing PFDs as required;
- ⌘ Conflicts between boaters and PWC users;
- ⌘ Lack of awareness of relevant hunting and fishing regulations; and
- ⌘ Swimmers getting hypothermia (in particular along the Feather River below the dam and Diversion Pool) despite posted warnings.

As a result, implement an improved visitor education and visitor management program, potentially a component of a proposed I&E Program. An updated I&E Program should build off of existing programs and highlight visitor safety such as: (1) the importance of wearing PFDs while boating; (2) the dangers of alcohol use

while boating; (2) providing additional signage informing recreational users of regulations, especially those related to PWC operation, hunting, and fishing; and (3) additional signage warning potential swimmers of cold water at access points along the Low Flow Channel and the Diversion Pool.

6.3.4.3 Other Additional Safety-related Actions Over Time

Provide improved communications, additional law enforcement, and/or marine patrols as needed during the anticipated term of the new license:

- € Provide additional marine patrols as needed at Lake Oroville. Additional land-based law enforcement patrols may also be needed over the new license term. These needs should be monitored and addressed over time when the need is demonstrated.
- € Improve cellular phone coverage at Lake Oroville which is sometimes isolated. Cellular phone coverage was noted as poor or intermittent at some recreation areas and reservoir zones. This lack of coverage in a few areas could potentially increase response time if boaters and other visitors could not reach appropriate authorities in a timely manner in the event of an accident or emergency. To improve cellular phone coverage and quality at recreation sites and areas with poor or intermittent coverage, alert cellular phone providers to the limitations of their service coverage and cooperate with them to help improve coverage over time.
- € Improve floating debris removal (most commonly logs) in Lake Oroville. Floating logs may create potential hazards for boaters on the reservoir. Currently, DWR and DPR collect this debris by boat. The frequency, location, timing, and effectiveness of this ongoing effort should be monitored and adapted as needed over time to improve conditions.
- € Provide additional visitor education as part of a proposed I&E Program about the very cold water in the Diversion Pool and Low Flow Channel that can potentially cause hypothermia in swimmers.
- € To help inform boaters about daily water fluctuations that may affect boating access or safety, place additional buoys in some shallow areas of the Thermalito Afterbay that currently do not have marker buoys. Additionally, post hazard maps or provide brochures at boat ramps.
- € Reduce the number of recreation-related safety issues in the OWA by better educating the public about the water flow hazards from the Afterbay outlet into the Feather River that can be a potential drowning hazard, particularly during higher flows (potential I&E Program element).
- € Provide additional State law enforcement in the OWA area where conflicts

occur between anglers and other users, primarily at the Afterbay outlet. These patrols could concentrate on the Afterbay outlet area, especially during the peak fishing season. Additional patrols may also be used to dissuade illegal dumping that occurs in the area.

6.3.5 Wildland Fire Evacuation Plan

Develop a fire evacuation plan for recreational users in the OWA. An evacuation plan is an important visitor management program element in potential wildfire areas that receive significant recreational use. Special attention should be paid to ingress/regress from the Afterbay outlet area. Alternatively, consider closing the OWA to public use during periods of high or extreme fire hazard.

6.3.6 Comprehensive Non-motorized Trails Program

Develop a comprehensive non-motorized trails program for the Oroville Facilities area. The future trails program should explore whether conflicts due to multiple-use designation are occurring. If significant conflicts are occurring, the future plan should outline management strategies to address safety and/or user experience challenges, as well as attempt to minimize these challenges from occurring on other trails.

Develop additional trail opportunities (particularly loops) within the Oroville Facilities area. The Thermalito Forebay, Thermalito Afterbay, and Diversion Pool are areas where trails surround all or part of the water body, but do not connect. In addition, the Lime Saddle area is an area where trail connections are lacking between sites.

6.3.7 Interpretation and Education Program

Consider developing an Interpretation and Education (I&E) Program for the Oroville Facilities area. The study area is currently lacking a comprehensive I&E Program. Potential I&E Program components may include:

- € I&E-related facilities;
- € I&E-related services and programs;
- € I&E themes, messages and stories;
- € Design details and aesthetic guidelines for future I&E developments;
- € Optional: Environmental graphics and communication component; and
- € Optional: Logo/graphics of the Oroville Facilities (including city of Oroville) identity branding.

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